

## PSFC Executive Committee Meeting Notes

5.7.14

### In Person

Evan Lewis, Corps

Steve Landino, Jen Steger, Elizabeth Babcock, NOAA

Bill Labiosa, USGS

Frank Shipley, USGS

Renee Wallis, NOAA

Rick Parkin, Carrie Byron, Michael Rylko, EPA

### Phone:

Bob Dach, BIA

Sharon Love, FHWA

### Update on status of Jamestown S’Klallam Forum – Evan Lewis

- Jamestown has come up with a plan working with partners such as Clallam County, WDFW, and others to restore areas in the lower Dungeness floodplain
- The corps is pursuing Phase I work funded through the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters authority (same fund source as was used for Seahurst and Qwuloolt), which will fund design and implementation
- Going forward - by the end of the FY, 35% design and permitting should be done. Then looking to see project approval 1<sup>st</sup> Q of FY15. Then detailed design and award of contract in FY15, and construction summer 2016.
- The Corps is working with Tribe. Started w/ \$15k and getting an additional \$85k to examine other phases and do hydraulic modeling/identify potential levee setbacks in phases 2, 5, & 6
- Phases 3,4,and 7 will be next. More hydraulic modeling, examine baseline condition, look at where flooding would be without levees
- Also will look at interaction of phase 1 and phase 3, breaching vs. removal, consider size/footprint of new levees on offsite properties
- For phase 7, proposed private levee setback is along alignment of existing road. This would be a dual purpose road/levee w/ 100 year flood protection
- Need to do assessment of property values and ownership to find out how they could obtain land, as well as cost estimates for levee removal and setback levees
- The area also rich in cultural resources so they want to assess those too.
- Also will do federal interest determination report for other phases to look at different corps authorities that could be used to partner on funding. Maybe PSAW fund, or Estuary Restoration Act funds. The Corps will look at what they would do, opportunities to get it done, and if there can be a federal cost share.
- For Phase I, land is procured (mostly county land). No info on real estate ownership on other phases, but county owns a lot of land. Lots of this land is large dairy/ag, with some residential
- Tribe has had this on their radar a long time. From Corps perspective, they are asking what they can do to try to help the tribe along.
- Can connect this to the TRAR effort more broadly. Corps has a tribal partnership program to work with other tribes on issues such as ecosystem restoration and village relocation on

reservations on coast. Trying to investigate ways to make tribes aware of this project. Need to identify resources and then can go after funding.

- Jen has had some preliminary discussions with Corps in DC to try to bring in SAGE funding to pay for coordination activities. Could be potential areas for FEMA buy out or other opportunity.

#### **Coordinated investments – Elizabeth Babcock, Steve Landino and Jen Steger**

- Elizabeth - Last November NOAA put together a proposal for “path forward” discussion for binning work. There is lots of overlap between that work and what NOAA was already doing on federal investments. Question for group p- do we work this through federal family or just keep working with partners. FEMA may have additional contribution.
- Steve - Provided background/update on riparian buffer work by NOAA and other agency partners (EPA, responding to TRAR). Last year Will Stelle sent out NOAA buffer table to EPA and NRCS and asked us to condition funds to further salmon recovery. Both agencies tried, EPA still working it but NRCS ran into difficulties and stopped. Program was trying to be responsive to TRAR and bring conservation to landscapes.
- For EPA the condition hasn’t gone as well as we’d have hoped. EPA and Ecology tried but didn’t work that well. NWIFC asked state agencies to condition programs in similar way. WCC declined to do this and proposed other things.
- State RCO runs PCSRF funds. People asked why NOAA hadn’t conditioned SRF Board funds for this – mainly because this is already a salmon funding program.
- RCO put out a proposal for using buffers and sought public comment in April. Different landscapes – we have been working in ag, they are working across all salmon recovery. RCO got push back from locals working on salmon recovery since the process has always been a bottoms up process. The perception is that these conditions would be top down.
- Some agencies have a regulatory program they can use. But others do not, including NOAA. Trying to put pieces together to do a better job in conservation on g lands
- Nibbling around edges with buffers here or there is not working. We need to take bigger bites to address salmon recovery. Trying to bring together multiple fund sources to have an actual result on the ground. It takes a coalition.
- Site visit at Port Susan with county, state, NOAA, others shows how money sticks to money.
- We can all bring our own authorities to different scenarios so collectively we can take a bigger chunk. So that is why NOAA is coming to federal caucus to see if other agencies can partner up to get in on bigger solutions and want to figure out how to work together.
- The Nature Conservancy/State Floodplains by Design project put together a draft project portfolio for coordinated projects in Puget Sound watersheds. They have a matrix of impacts, benefits, tribal resources, etc. on about 12 projects. 3 are all across the board successes – in the Dungeness, Lower Stilly, and Lower Nooksack. These are important salmon recovery areas.
- NOAA has offered to go through our matrix of actions developed in response to TRAR to see if they could identify areas we could help. NOAA is fully bought in to concept, wants to coordinate with other agencies.
- TNC has done a lot of work on this, and NOAA latched wagon to them. NOAA will continue to make this happen as the floodplains work is going extremely well. The work Makes sense at watershed scale, floodplain scale.

- Michael - NRCS announced riparian ag easement process statewide. There may be competition between conservation easements and ag easements
- Tribes asked us to coordinate federal investments and regulations. This was very first bullet we addressed in action plan.
- Couple other places where this is working. DFI, TFE, 3FI all going on. They have done some sophisticated hydrogeomorphic modeling in Skagit that could support this
- This has to be place-based. Watersheds that have done planning will rise to the top and get selected for funding without it seeming to be playing favorites.
- Michael - EPA wants to invest in conservation easements rather than force buffers on people. Have \$2.8 million for this work. On the RFP side of things, how do we best position our work in alignment with others. Doing an RFQ asking where relationships are in place to support a pipeline of work rather than
- Will Stelle has been frustrated with regulatory programs to move needle at larger scale. Programs did good work but rarely at a scale to be prominently supportive of salmon recovery.
- Rick – that is in line with what The Governor said about spreading butter too thin on bread. Need to concentrate and coordinate.
- Targeted conversations with agencies that could be involved (FEMA, USFWS, NRCS, others)
- Bob - BIA is ready to sign up!
- Renee - Navy can only respond on/near bases. Can put things in integrated natural resources plan to help.
- Renee - what resources does BIA have that can support this kind of stuff? Bob - BIA funds are pass-through dollars to specific Tribes. Pots of money designated for specific purposes are there, advertised to tribes, who provide proposals for ranking and funding. Mainly done on reservation lands. Usually other federal agencies on hook for U&As (mitigation areas)
- Navy was involved in HCILF and can work through those programs. Limited amount of time to spend on mitigation. ILF programs could work
- Interim readiness training program through DOD can be used to have off duty military members work on projects like blowing up dikes, derelict gear removal. Anyone can submit a project and the Navy figures out which ones meet training needs.
- Renee's group could give a presentation on that program
- Bob will look into what the BIA can do. With increasing tribal self-governance, many programs have been turned over to tribes themselves. Tribes' natural resources programs have taken over many projects and those decisions are up to individual tribes. There is a disparity amongst tribes in expertise.
- Elizabeth – there is a delicate balance between concentrating resources and “picking” areas.

#### **Fish passage barriers – Carrie Byron (From USFS Notes)**

- We are preparing for a field season of collecting additional information at approximately 40 salmon migration barriers across Puget Sound.
- We are investigating ways to reduce travel costs for the field crew by finding places for them to stay in bunkhouses on Forest Service and National Park Service facilities.
- We received another \$15,000 Service First grant to complete our prioritization work this year.

- Field work will begin at the beginning of July on the Olympic National Park, where they have been given bunk space to cut travel costs. They are expected to be there for 2 weeks and then will move on.
- Frank - Are they looking at climate change? Carrie isn't sure.
- Rick - We said we wanted to give money to the FS to advance this and the Leadership was initially skeptical. The FS said they'd look at barriers off of FS land and fund most strategic projects wherever they are. For 1<sup>st</sup> year doing a project opening up 5 miles of habitat and replacing bridge on county land. Also some projects on NPS and FS land opening up ~6 miles on county land. Our upper mgmt here did not want to fund projects on state lands. So we are just focusing on federal lands.

#### **Shoreline Armoring Permitting – Rick Parkin**

- NOAA and EPA have been working with Corps on this and divided responsibilities between NOAA & EPA
- EPA looking at nationwide permits. Corps had put in Regional General Condition requiring individual permits for new armoring on east side of sound. We initially asked they extend to all of PS
- Now the thought is to prioritize areas threatened due to armoring and get RGC applied to those
- The agencies had a good meeting last time we met, put together strategy and timeline to reach agreement or to elevate to higher authorities
- We are also talking about compensatory mitigation. Not working so well in PS, especially for NWPs. Lack of opportunities for in-kind mitigation and people's perceptions were preventing good mitigation.
- Having discussions with agencies trying to get ILF programs studied in past and try to create ILF program PS wide addressing marine projects, not just armoring but others too. Need a big enough scope that you can buy anything but not so big it does not work.
- Frank - PSNERP has classified different ecological functions and is a process-based look at state of shoreline
- Evan – PSNERP is still going and a draft report will be out this summer with a draft EIS. Also working through HQ and with sponsor to make sure that it is feasible. Next step is to collect public comments, fine tune designs and alternatives, move toward final report. Likely some additional NEPA for individual projects will be needed since design does not get too far along.
- The goal is to get to final feasibility report/EIS approved by Corps HQ who sends to congress to move into construction. That will have list of projects that have been selected. There are a handful of projects in preferred plan.
- If Corps cost-shares, then the project has to be pure restoration, can't be mitigation. Qwuloolt has some parts of sites that are mitigation, some Corps cost-shared.
- Lynn Wetzler is project manager at Corps. 35 projects have fact sheets, on the PSNERP website.

#### **Jurisdictional issue – Elizabeth Babcock**

- We are trying to align federal programs. Moving the Corps jurisdiction from Mean Higher High Water to line of Highest Astronomical Tide could make a big difference in how many projects get permits and impacts get mitigated. Alaska uses Extreme High Tide.

- Discussions have matured to a policy level. Division leadership met with Will and Dennis and staff. Response was that it was a valid concern but they wouldn't do it due to feasibility concerns and fairness concerns. Final result was an agreement to disagree.
- At one point we thought HAT issue was ripe for elevation. Don't think that it will get elevation now. But it is not off the table.
- Actions on NWP's would be much stronger if jurisdiction issue were resolved.
- NOAA also working to quantify benefit of movement of line. Initial calculations show that the difference between HAT and MHHW on 2% beach protects extra 200 feet. There are social, equity issues, ecological issues. NOAA's study will be done sometime next year.

#### **Upcoming Meetings - All**

- On June 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be a meeting of agency Deputies in Washington, DC to discuss the issue elevation process. We do not yet have an agenda for this meeting. Possible MMD or the riparian issue would be discussed as examples of issues we are working in the region.
- On May 29<sup>th</sup> the 3 Co-chairs will be having a conference call to prep for 5/3 meeting.
- \*Carrie will send issue elevation process to Executive Committee and ask them to brief up.

#### **Updates - All**

- Evan - Colonel Estok leaving mid-July. Change of command on 7/18.
- Wrapping up construction on Seahurst. Goal is to have construction done and park reopened no later than 7/4. Most work is upland. Found a few surprises that moved construction back - a bigger shell midden than they thought and a sewer line not buried as deep as they said it was. But moving forward
- Frank – USGS is not a regulatory agency, but can support TRAR effort if anyone has science needs.
- The agency is busy working on landslide issues, and has proposals out for work in the Lower Stilly and want to know about projects in that area if we need them.
- USGS is reaching out and having meetings with tribes, supposed to meet about Suquamish soon
- Will be looking at a study on coal train potential. There is interest in a project on transit risks of coal trains (can lose 500 lbs of coal dust on way from Wyoming). Tribes very interested in that issue and on VTRA.
- Elizabeth - NOAA has a habitat status and trends report with indicators in PS. Hoping this will be a quantitative companion to the Millie Judge report